

(a) whether Government have waived the five per cent duty on import of wheat by private traders to ease pressure on bulk consumers;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the quantity of wheat which have been imported after the reduction on duty and to which extent the price of wheat has come down in the market?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (DR. AKHILESH PRASAD SINGH): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) Vide Notification No. 97/2006-Cus. Dated September 9, 2006 of Department of Revenue, Ministry of Finance, the *ad valorem* duty rates of wheat have been reduced to 'NIL' rate of duty from existing 5%.

(c) It is estimated that 6.6 lakh MT of wheat have been imported by private traders, besides 35 lakh MT (out of 55 lakh MT wheat contracted for import) by the State Trading Corporation of India (for the Central Pool) at Zero rate of duty. The price of wheat has not come down after the reduction in duty.

#### **Production of foodgrains**

1035. SHRI ABU ASIM AZMI: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that due to overcare of industrial development in the country, a large fertile land has been covered resulting in a heavy reduction of agricultural production;

(b) if so, the total production of foodgrains, rice, pulses, etc. during the current year, State-wise;

(c) whether this production is in a position to meet the need of the country; and

(d) if not, whether Government are importing wheat, if so, the quantity thereof and at what prices it shall be supplied to the common man?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI KANTI LAL BHURIA): (a) As per available Land Use Statistics, the total

agricultural land (net area sown and current fallow land) in the country, which also includes fertile land remains more or less stable around 183 million hectares over 4 to 5 years. Industrial development, *ipso facto*, has no impact on reduction of agricultural production.

(b) Does not arise in view of the reply to (a)

(c) and (d) According to the demand projections made for the Tenth Five Year, the demand for cereals during 2005-06 stands at 174.92 million tonnes. The estimated cereals production made during 2005-06 stands at 195.19 million tonnes. Food stocks are maintained by the Central Government according to buffer stock norms to meet the food security needs of the country. During 2006-07, the Government has decided to import 55 lakh tones of wheat for the Central pool to increase the level of wheat stocks and to meet its requirement under targeted public distribution system and other welfare schemes. The imported wheat is intended to be distributed under targeted Public Distribution System (PDS) and under other welfare schemes at central issue prices notified from time to time. Wheat are available to below poverty line population at Rs. 4.15 per kg., above poverty line population at Rs. 6.10 per kg and the poorest of the poor covered under Antadoya Anna Yojana Scheme at Rs. 2.00 per kg.

### **Assistance to State Pesticide Testing Laboratory**

1036. SHRI KALRAJ MISHRA:  
SHRI SANTOSH BAGRODIA:

Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government will issue sanction of Rs. 393.00 lakhs during 2006-07 for establishing facilities for analysis of residues by strengthening and upgradation of State Pesticide Testing Laboratory, Durgapura, Jaipur; and

(b) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI KANTILAL BHURIA): (a) and (b) Government of India has already sanctioned an amount of Rs. 393.00 lakhs on 21.6.2006 for the establishment of a Residue Testing Laboratory at Durgapura, Jaipur.